

VILLAGE OF DEXTER COMMUNITY GARDEN



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Village of Dexter Community Garden 2011 Season Wrap Up

The Village of Dexter community Garden was a growing success for a second year in 2011! Share in the garden's story this year and the gardener's growing achievements.

Village of Dexter Community Garden

VILLAGE OF DEXTER COMMUNITY GARDEN 2011 SEASON WRAP UP

The Garden is Growing!

Garden applications were available this year kicking off in late winter until spring via links available on the Village of Dexter web site. It was important to reach as many area residents as possible to promote the gardening program so a variety of resources were used to spread the word. Promotion of the garden and garden applications commenced on the homepage of the village's web site then in the village's winter newsletter, in emails sent by the village, signage at the garden, LCD at the Dexter library and communication with last year's gardeners.

Again this year Village of Dexter residents were able to apply for plots at the garden before non- residents, and this year returning gardeners were able to request their same plots as last season. The garden hosts a variety of community gardeners from apartment dwellers with no space to grow to more "urban" residents with large trees or small lots, to people who just want to enjoy the camaraderie a community garden offers. What all these gardeners have in common is the desire to grow their own food and in many cases share it with others.

This year interest in and awareness of the community garden was so high that the number of plots was increased from 10 in 2010 to 16 in 2011 (all of the plots are 20x20' and gardeners can apply for a half plot or a whole plot)!

After receiving confirmation of their plot applications and plot assignments, gardeners were invited to a kick off meeting at the garden on April 27th. At this meeting guidelines for the site were reviewed, a tour was given and questions were answered about the community garden and gardening in general.

"ONE OF THE MOST FUN ASPECTS OF THE GARDEN WAS TAKING ALL OF OUR HOUSE GUESTS ON A TOUR WHEN THEY WERE VISITING. MOST OF OUR FAMILY IS FROM OUT OF STATE AND THEY WERE SO HAPPY TO SEE THAT DEXTER HAS A COMMUNITY GARDEN."

By May 14th plowing and staking out of the garden was complete and the gardeners had their first work party of the season. At this party the fence was raised around the garden, mulch was spread in the main pathway and gardeners had a great opportunity to meet their gardening neighbors. Other garden get-togethers took place in July and September where the gardeners were able to continue to get to know one another better. The gardeners closed the garden October 15th at the final work party of the season where they removed portions of the fence and tidied the garden for the fall plow.



Fence raising crew: Spring 2011

Exciting News

In September the garden welcomed the addition of 4 raised gardening beds built as part of an Eagle Scout project. These raised beds, designed for gardeners whose mobility may be impaired, are intended to make gardening easier for this population by being built at heights that lessen the need to bend and kneel. Two of the new raised beds are about 3' high and two are about 4' high. These raised beds will be included in the 2012 application and will be designated for those who express a need for this type of gardening.



Raised bed build



Completed raised beds!

"AS FOR THE OFF SEASON, OUR FREEZER IS FILLED WITH FROZEN VEGGIES AND THE PANTRY WITH JARS OF SALSA, CRUSHED TOMATOES AND JUICE. I CANNED ENOUGH FOR OURSELVES AND TO GIVE SALSA AWAY AS GIFTS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON"

Village of Dexter Community Garden 2011 Gardener Survey Results

**All gardeners were asked to participate in the community garden survey. Not all gardeners responded to the survey, and not all of those responding answered all the questions on the survey.*

Number of plots in garden: 16 full plots (or 32 half plots)

Number of Primary Gardeners: 15

Number of surveys received: 12

"FOR ME, THE GARDEN COMBINES MY LOVE OF BEING CLOSE TO THE EARTH AND IN TUNE WITH THE SEASONS, HARD WORK, FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND HEALTHY FOOD. AS A FARM GIRL FROM IOWA, THIS PAST SUMMER OF GARDENING BROUGHT BACK MANY FOND MEMORIES OF WORKING OUR LARGE GARDEN WITH MY GRANDMOTHER AS A CHILD"

**Answers below represent combined totals and are best estimates on the part of the participants*

How many people gardened in your plot this growing season?: 63

Did you share your produce with others?: Produce was shared with friends, co-workers, agencies like Faith in Action, extended family, neighbors, immediate family

How many people did you share your produce with? (your best guess as to how many people ate produce from your garden): 226

How much have you shared with others this growing season?: 583lbs

What did you grow in your plot?:

Cayenne peppers, white and yellow onions, many varieties of tomatoes, corn, butternut squash, eggplant, many varieties of potatoes, zinnia, Swiss chard, red & green bell peppers, many varieties of beans, zucchini, cucumbers, strawberries, corn, cantaloupe, watermelon, carrots, many varieties of peas, chili (serranos, habaneros, jalapenos) peppers, sunflowers, celery, acorn squash, red and green cabbage, summer squash, cherry tomatoes, pumpkins, kale, lettuce



How much would you say you have harvested from your plot this growing season?: ~1208 lbs of produce (author's note: many gardeners responded to this question with "1/2 bushel" or "4 bunches of lettuce". The number in pounds is mine, and a best estimate)

Harvesting more than Produce

As with community gardens everywhere, the Dexter Village community garden brought people together from many walks of life. A variety of professions, age groups and socio economic groups were represented at the garden. These people came together to grow food, and the common denominator for everyone was gardening. But the gardeners were not the only ones to feel the sense of community the garden created. Area merchants like Hackney Hardware and the Dexter Mill supported the garden with their generous donations of supplies and other area businesses contributed financially to the program.

Working together as a community, our community garden is certainly a "growing" program!

"I WAS HAPPY (AND PROUD) OF THE COMMUNITY GARDEN IN OUR LITTLE TOWN!"
